

Papal shooting probe moves 1

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'Right-wing killers coached Ali Agca to finger Soviets,' then entered U.S.

An Italian court last week prepared to hear final arguments in the trial of seven men accused of complicity in the 1981 shooting of Pope John Paul. A verdict is expected later this month.

No concrete evidence has emerged to confirm the "Bulgarian connection" version set forth by convicted papal assailant Mehmet Ali Agca. Last week, however, the trial took a new twist when the court decided not to further question Francesco Pazienza, an Italian businessman jailed in New York, about his alleged role in "coaching" Agca. According to a convicted Italian gangster, Pazienza helped Italian intelligence agents persuade Agca to invent the plot. Intelligence agents have denied the allegations.

What follows is a report that first appeared in the Dec. 24 issue of the Village Voice, based on what Pazienza has already told investigators.

By MARTIN A. LEE and KEVIN COOGAN

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New York

ANALYSIS

WHEN ITALIAN JUDGE Ilario Martella arrived in New York in December to continue his four-year-long inquiry into the plot to kill Pope John Paul II, his intention was to question Francesco Pazienza, a former Italian intelligence official now in jail in Manhattan, regarding allegations that Pazienza coached convicted gunman Mehmet Ali Agca to blame the papal shooting on the Bulgarian secret service. But Martella may have gotten more than he expected.

Indeed, Pazienza's revelations could alter the course of Martella's entire investigation, shifting the emphasis from Bulgaria and the KGB to right-wing terrorists with extensive connections in the West. At the very least, the information passed on to Martella is a serious — perhaps fatal — blow to the credibility of the "Bulgarian connection"



JUDGE ILARIO MARTELLA

theory, advanced by Claire Sterling and others, to explain the attempt on the pope's life.

Both Agca and another witness in the Bulgarian connection trial, Giovanni Pandico, charged that Pazienza visited Agca in prison and persuaded him to testify that Bulgarian agents were behind his unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the pope in St. Peter's Square in May 1981. In one of the contradictions that have become a hallmark of his courtroom appearances, Agca later withdrew the accusation against Pazienza. But Martella was still eager to question the 39-year-old businessman-turned-spy, who was being held in New York pending extradition on an Italian warrant charging him with embezzling \$200,000 from the bankrupt Banco Ambrosiano. Pazienza is also wanted in Italy for extortion and leaking state secrets and was named last month in an indictment charging him with masterminding the 1980 train station bombing in Bologna that killed 85 people.

Also named in the Bologna indictment was Stefano delle Chiaie, Italy's most wanted right-wing terrorist. When he was interrogated by Martella in December, Pazienza denied any involvement with Agca. He then dropped



ALI AGCA at the time of his arrest in St. Peter's Square.

a bombshell of his own: Some months after the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II, delle Chiaie entered United States in the company of a Turkish terrorist closely linked to Agca, though this information had been known to U.S. officials for some time. It had not been passed along to Italian authorities.

Pazienza's testimony was given in a closed session in the fifth floor conference room of the Annex to the Federal Courthouse at Foley Square (New York City). Also present during the afternoon hearing were Pazienza

robe moves into U.S.



ALI AGCA at the time of his arrest for firing shots at the pope May 13, 1981, in St. Peter's Square.

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Pazienza's testimony was given Dec. 10, 1985 in a closed session in the fifth-floor conference room of the Annex to the Federal Courthouse at Foley Square [New York City]. Also present during the afternoon hearing were Pazienza's

attorney, Edward Morrison (a former deputy mayor of New York in the Lindsay administration), and David Denton, the assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, who handled the extradition case against Pazienza.

Two days after the meeting, the *Village Voice* spoke with Martella for half an hour. Although Martella refused to discuss the case on the record, based on this encounter and on an interview with Pazienza in prison, it was possible to

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Probe

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reconstruct what happened during the interrogation. Although Pazienza denied coaching Agca, he did allege that others in the Italian secret service had prompted Agca to implicate Bulgaria. "I then told Martella what I learned during a confidential meeting [in 1984] with U.S. government officials before I was arrested," Pazienza said. "On Sept. 26, 1984, I met with two U.S. customs agents — Thomas Galligan and Arthur Donelan. We talked for six hours at Morrison's Fifth Avenue law office. At first they asked me about the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano. Then the customs agents read a list of names they thought I might recognize. They wanted information about these people."

One of those mentioned, according to Pazienza, was Stefano delle Chiaie. "Galligan, the customs agent, said that delle Chiaie had entered Miami on a plane from South America," Pazienza disclosed to the *Voice*. "Then he told me that delle Chiaie was traveling with a very important man. Galligan described this person as a Turk who was directly linked to Ali Agca. This is what I explained to Judge Martella." Pazienza's account of the 1984 meeting with customs officials was corroborated by Morrison, who attended the session.

Pazienza says he cannot recall the name of delle Chiaie's companion. However, the *Voice* has learned from American intelligence sources that the Turkish traveler was Abdullah Catli, a leader of the Grey Wolves terrorist organization. Catli was one of Agca's closest associates in the months before the papal attack. Testifying in Rome in September 1985 at the trial of four Turks and three Bulgarians, all accused of conspiring with Agca, Catli (who is not one of the defendants) admitted that he gave Agca the gun that was used

Last month, at Pazienza's urging, Martella also questioned the two customs agents, Galligan and Donelan. So far, however, customs officials have refused to comment publicly about what was discussed. Spokespersons for customs, the State Department and the Justice Department also declined to comment on the U.S. failure to inform Italian authorities about either delle Chiaie or Catli.

This official silence is all the more curious when one examines the sordid biographies of the two men. Both delle Chiaie and Catli are ruthless killers who graduated from street-gang violence to become leaders of neofascist groups that are outspoken in their hatred of the pope.

* * *

Nicknamed *Il Caccola* ("shorty"), Stefano delle Chiaie is a lean, wiry

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Jewish corruption that must be destroyed by pagan fascism or "purified" along racial lines.

But delle Chiaie was not satisfied with mere polemics. A year after joining Ordine Nuovo, delle Chiaie created a militant spin-off organization called Avanguardia Nazionale ("National Vanguard"). As Stuart Christie reports in his *Stefano Delle Chiaie: Portrait of a Black Terrorist*, delle Chiaie and his companions began to infiltrate leftist circles and break up student unions at the behest of the Italian secret service. "We are for man-to-man engagements," announced one of Avanguardia Nazionale's leaflets. "Before setting out, our men are morally prepared, so that they learn to break the bones even of somebody who kneels down and cries."

When the Italian Communist party registered repeated gains at the polls during the late 1960s, delle Chiaie's thugs sprang into action. In December 1969 a bomb exploded at Piazza Fontana in Milan, killing 16 people and injuring nearly 100. Security officials initially tried to blame a group of Italian anarchists, in an attempt to discredit the left. But Italian magistrates later discovered that the bomb was planted by Mario Merlino, delle Chiaie's chief lieutenant.

The Piazza Fontana massacre was the opening salvo in a wave of spectacular bombings that rocked Italy during the next decade. This tactic, known in Italy as "the strategy of tension," was designed to engender fear and terror among the populace as a prelude to the installation of strong-man government that would restore "law and order."

After participating in an abortive military coup against Italy's Christian Democratic government in December 1970, delle Chiaie fled to Madrid. Soon he was hired by [General Francisco] Franco's secret police to set up a team of hitmen who waged clandestine war against Basque separatists in the early 1970s. His global activities during this period were coordinated through a Lis-

London Times and London Observer. D'Aubuisson was so impressed by delle Chiaie when they were introduced in 1979 that he asked the fugitive Italian to draw up a document on how the Salvadoran army should conduct its counterinsurgency. In March of the following year, Archbishop Oscar Romero, the popular leader of the Catholic church in El Salvador, was martyred while saying mass. According to former U.S. ambassador Robert White, it was D'Aubuisson who gave the order to assassinate Romero.

Delle Chiaie played a key role in a July 1980 coup that succeeded in putting Bolivia under the control of a fascist military dictatorship. One of the kingpins of the "cocaine coup," as it has been called, was Colonel Luis Arce Gómez, otherwise known as "the Idi Amin of the Andes." After the coup, Gómez assembled a team of security advisers headed by delle Chiaie and Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie. This group — appropriately named "the Fiancés of Death" — instructed Bolivian soldiers in torture techniques and helped protect the flourishing cocaine trade that provided the main source of revenue for the Bolivian junta. Joachim Fiebelkorn, a former Fiance of Death now in jail in West Germany, told West German police that delle Chiaie was the middleman between the Bolivian cocaine colonels and the Sicilian heroin dons.

While in Bolivia, delle Chiaie continued to direct a group of dedicated subordinates in Italy. Aug. 2, 1980, a bomb destroyed the Bologna train station, leaving hundreds dead and injured. Once again, the initial blame fell on the Italian left, while all of those indicted last month, including delle Chiaie, Pazienza and Licio Gelli, former head of the neo-fascist Propaganda Due (P-2) masonic lodge, are connected with the extreme right.

One month after the Bologna bombing, delle Chiaie returned to Buenos Aires, where he enjoyed the protection

September 1985 at the trial of four Turks and three Bulgarians all accused of conspiring with Agca, Catli (who is not one of the defendants) admitted that he gave Agca the gun that was used to shoot John Paul II.

According to U.S. intelligence sources, delle Chiaie and Catli flew into Miami from South America on the same commercial jet early in the morning of Sept. 9, 1982. The sources did not indicate how long delle Chiaie and Catli remained in the United States or the nature of their visit but did say it is thought that the two were traveling together. Certain officials had known about Catli and delle Chiaie since at least April 1984 — and had reported this information to their superiors — but this evidence was not shared with the Italian authorities who are probing the papal shooting until Pazienza spoke with Martella last month. "We never heard anything about delle Chiaie and a Turk," said a spokesperson for Martella's office in Rome shortly before the judge left for New York.

that are outspoken in their hatred of the pope.

figure, barely more than five feet tall. But his looks are deceptive, for he is responsible for some of the most brutal acts of terrorism in postwar Italy.

In 1958, at age 22, delle Chiaie joined a right-wing extremist organization called Ordine Nuovo ("New Order"), whose motto was borrowed from the Nazi SS: "Our honor is our loyalty." For ideological inspiration delle Chiaie looked to Ordine Nuovo's guru, the Italian Nazi philosopher Julius Evola, an SS collaborator during World War II. Evola's writings are saturated with contempt for the Catholic church, which he describes as a festering citadel of

he was hired by [General Francisco] Franco's secret police to set up a team of hitmen who waged clandestine war against Basque separatists in the early 1970s. His global activities during this period were coordinated through a Lisbon-based organization called Aginterpress, which employed delle Chiaie as a "correspondent." Documents that surfaced during the 1974 military uprising in Portugal show that Aginterpress provided cover for espionage activities undertaken by the Portuguese secret service in Africa. According to Ferdinand Laurent in his book *L'Orchestre à 12*, delle Chiaie advised Jonas Savimbi, head of UNITA, a South Africa-backed rebel group in Angola that had close ties with Portuguese intelligence.

Delle Chiaie also found his talents in demand in Latin America. In 1975 he was approached by Michael Townley, an American who was working for DINA, Chile's secret police. As John Dinges, coauthor of *Assassination on Embassy Row*, told the Voice, "Townley, who planned and carried out the murder of Orlando Letelier, Chile's former ambassador to the U.S., in Washington, D.C., in 1976, sought delle Chiaie's help in recruiting the men who tried to kill Bernardo Leighton. Leighton, an exiled leader of the Chilean Christian Democratic party — and one of the top opposition leaders to the [Augusto] Pinochet regime — was shot in the head in Rome in 1975, survived the attack, but ceased his political activity. The following year, delle Chiaie visited Chile and stayed at Townley's house while participating in other DINA operations."

Shortly thereafter, delle Chiaie shifted his base of operations to Buenos Aires. He traveled frequently to other fascist redoubts in Latin America, peddling his services to newfound comrades such as Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, a key figure in El Salvador's death squads. According to *The Nazi Legacy*, written by a team of reporters from the

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of the Argentine junta, for the Fourth Congress of the Latin American Anti-Communist League (CAL). One of the moving forces behind CAL was a secret society based in Mexico called *Los Tecos*, whose publication *Replica* had once listed Aginterpress (delle Chiaie's journalistic cover) as its European correspondent. In 1984 columnist Jack Anderson exposed the role of the Tecos and CAL in death-squad activities throughout Latin America. According to Anderson, the Tecos dogma "made enemies of Jews, Jesuits and communists — with a bit of medieval Nordic mythology thrown in for good measure. . . . CAL-Tecos propaganda, published in their

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magazine, *Replica*, broadcast weird stories about Jews, witches, drug addicts and homosexuals taking over the Vatican. During his visit to Mexico, Pope John Paul II was elevated by these propagandists from a homosexual drug addict to the Antichrist."

May 27, 1981, two weeks after the papal shooting, the chief of Italy's anti-terrorist police (DIGOS) circulated a memo that listed 17 Turks tied to Ali Agca. On that list was the name of Abdullah Catli.

Catli was one of the most important leaders of the Grey Wolves, a right-wing terrorist organization that plagued Turkey in the 1970s. In his early 20s, he headed the Grey Wolf youth group in Ankara, and by 1978 he was second in command of the entire organization. Catli's meteoric ascension was largely due to his role as an "enforcer" for the Grey Wolves' parent organization, the National Action Party (NAP), led by Colonel Alparslan Türkeş. When Turkish police linked him directly to the killing of seven trade union activists in 1978, Catli went underground.

Catli's main lieutenant in the Grey Wolves, Oral Celik, was a close friend of Mehmet Ali Agca's. Agca, a small-time fascist hood from Malatya, only came into notoriety in 1979 when he agreed to take the blame for killing Abdi Ipecki, editor-in-chief of *Milliyet*, a liberal Istanbul newspaper. Agca's comrades promised they would break him out of prison and they kept their word. "Catli oversaw the jailbreak while Celik took care of the logistical details," *Milliyet* correspondent Orsan Oymen told the Voice. Oymen said he thinks Celik actually murdered Ipecki.

Shortly after his November 1979 prison escape, Agca sent a letter to *Milliyet* in which he threatened to kill John Paul II ("the pope commander of the Crusades") when the pontiff visited Istanbul. Agca, meanwhile, slipped away to Ankara. "Agca was safehoused by the Grey Wolves' parent organization,"

cash that were kicked back to the Grey Wolves parent group, the NAP.

In his book *Arms Smuggling and Terrorism*, Ugur Mumcu, a reporter for the Turkish news daily *Cumhuriyet*, discussed the activities of Turkish gangsters in Sophia. The Turkish godfathers, according to Mumcu, directed

'Agca was safehoused by Catli and the Grey Wolf underground for 20 days.'

a major smuggling network that sent sophisticated arms to the Mideast in exchange for heroin that filtered through Bulgaria en route to Italy. Certain Turkish mobsters maintained villas in Sophia, where they had business relations with a Bulgarian state-owned import-export firm called Kintex, which was heavily involved in arms trafficking. These links (between Kintex and Turkish organized crime) have prompted speculation in the Western press that the Bulgarian secret service — and ultimately the Russians — conspired to kill the pope.

Claire Sterling, the main promoter of the so-called Bulgarian connection to the papal shooting, consistently downplays Agca's association with the Grey Wolves. In her book *Time of the Assassins*, she fails to mention that Agca's close associate, Abdullah Catli, was an important Grey Wolf leader. Sterling's cursory description of Catli overemphasizes his relationship with the

cow is the principal source of world terrorism. Sterling's chapter on Italy ignores the reign of terror promulgated by right-wing extremists and never once mentions Stefano delle Chiaie.

After his Bulgarian sojourn in mid-1980, Agca shared a house with Catli and a group of Grey Wolves in Vienna. As reported in the *New York Times*, the pistol Agca used to shoot the pope was purchased from a Viennese gun dealer by Oral Celik. Catli, Celik's close friend, has admitted giving the gun to Agca.

Italian magistrates now think Agca had other accomplices in St. Peter's Square when he wounded John Paul II on May 13, 1981. Agca told the court that Celik was there but that he melted into the crowd immediately after the attack. Catli's activities from this point on are shrouded in mystery. He was briefly detained by Swiss police in February 1982, but the authorities released him 48 hours before an arrest warrant arrived from Turkey, where he had been convicted in absentia for the murder of the seven Turkish trade unionists.

Judge Jorg Schild, chief of narcotics prosecutions in Basel, told *Time* magazine that Catli and Celik were running a heroin smuggling operation during this period. Catli's machinations evidently took him far afield. Sept. 9, 1982, he flew into Mizmi from South America on the same plane with Stefano delle Chiaie.

That was not the first encounter between the Grey Wolves and the Italian fascists. Before the papal shooting, the Grey Wolves' parent organization, the NAP, had been in contact with the Italian Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (NAR) and Terza Posizione, which were both successors of delle Chiaie's Ordine Nuovo. Another factor connecting the Italian and Turkish right-wingers was the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), a Munich-based umbrella organization. In 1978 the ABN magazine endorsed a campaign to free the "polit-

Jewish-masonic-communist conspiracy, and their papers carried ads for Turkish translations of Nazi literature. Like delle Chiaie, the Turkish fanatics were avowed enemies of the Catholic church. Both groups demonstrated a willingness to translate their beliefs into action.

The known ties between delle Chiaie's network and the Grey Wolves pose an obvious question: Were the Turks working with delle Chiaie when they tried to kill the pope? The plot to assassinate John Paul II is similar in one important respect to the Piazza Fontana bombing in Milan instigated by delle Chiaie — and to the Bologna train station bombing. All three attacks were unleashed by rightist terrorists who contrived to blame the left for what they had done.

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That passport, bearing the name "Faruk Ögün," was delivered to Agca in Sophia, Bulgaria, by Omer Mersan in the summer of 1980. Mersan recently confessed to Italian magistrates that he gave Agca the equivalent of \$770 when they met at the Hotel Vitosha in Sophia. Mersan also admitted that he passed the money to Agca at the behest of Abuzer Ugurlu, a Turkish organized crime boss who operated in the Bulgarian capital. Catli's henchmen functioned as protectors and couriers for Ugurlu in return for weapons and

days.

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Sterling's allegation that the Red Menace was behind Ali Agca is basically an extension of her previous book, *The Terror Network*, which claims that Mos-

briefly detained by Swiss police in February 1982, but the authorities released him 48 hours before an arrest warrant arrived from Turkey, where he had been convicted in absentia for the murder of the seven Turkish trade unionists.

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Catli's thugs and delle Chiaie shared a similar ideological perspective. Grey Wolf literature spoke openly of a vast

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onels in Bolivia, delle Chiaie narrowly escaped capture by a team of Italian and American agents. According to the *Nazi Legacy*, delle Chiaie later claimed he was tipped off by sources in American intelligence. Does this mean he is

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TIME TO REFLECT

Trial

(Continued from previous page)

being protected by a faction within the U.S. government?

Vincenzo Parisi, a top official of SISDE (Italian domestic intelligence), suggested as much when he testified in 1984 before the secret service oversight committee of the Italian parliament. According to the Italian newsweekly *L'Espresso*, Parisi, reporting on the investigation of the 1980 Bologna bombing, told the committee that delle Chiaie traveled undisturbed all over Latin America. When asked whether the fascist boss was possibly under the protection of a superpower, Parisi stated that U.S. intelligence offered only half-hearted assistance to its Italian counterparts who were attempting to collar delle Chiaie.

"Delle Chiaie enters and leaves the U.S. as he likes," Paziienza told the *Voice*. "That's what the customs officials said." Indeed, it appears that Italy's most wanted terrorist may have been using Miami as a base of operations. "When I put out feelers for an interview with delle Chiaie in 1984," French TV reporter Pierre Abramovici told the *Voice*, "our intermediary suggested an island near Miami as a meeting place."

While delle Chiaie roams freely on the terror circuit, his Turkish counterpart has come upon hard times. Arrested in France on drug charges in October 1984, Abdullah Catli is sequestered in a Parisian jail cell. When called last September as a witness at the Agca trial in Rome, Catli denied any involvement in the papal plot. He depicted the Grey Wolves as a group of petty thieves who had no political commitment. Catli told the court that he had shared a house with Agca and given him the gun. Agca, however, insisted that Agca

court. A heated argument ensued in Turkish, and Agca joined the fray. The three witnesses exchanged insults, accusations and suspicions of being used by foreign intelligence agencies to blame the papal assault on Bulgaria and the Soviet Union.

The most dramatic moment came when Catli alleged that Ozbey had served as a go-between for the West German secret service (BND). Catli

said he and Celik were promised a large sum of money by the BND via Ozbey if they signed a statement supporting Agca's claims of a communist conspiracy. When asked by the judge to confirm or deny the story, Ozbey refused to comment.

Agca's extensive association with Catli in the months before the assassination attempt is among the most significant revelations to come out of the

trial's 60 sessions thus far. With the Bulgarian connection unraveling in open court, the papal probe has begun to reexamine the role of Catli and his fascist clique. What Judge Martella learned about Catli and delle Chiaie during his visit to New York could be a turning point in the investigation. Whether the U.S. government will now cooperate with the Italian authorities remains to be seen. ■

Vatican banks on naivete defense

By PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

Vatican Affairs Writer

Oxford, England

ANALYSIS

IN SEPTEMBER 1982, three financial wise men — Joseph C. Brennan, Carlo Cerutti and Philippe de Weck — were asked to advise the Vatican about a precise question: Was the Institute of Religious Works (IOR), popularly known as the Vatican bank, involved in the crash of the Banco Ambrosiano, whose director, Roberto Calvi, was found hanging from Blackfriars Bridge, London, in June 1982?

The three men (by now they had been joined by a fourth, Hermann J. Abts) confessed that they could not, given the nature of the case, produce a final report. Their advice was that a joint Italy-Holy See commission should be set up to learn the facts. This was accepted. The Holy See agreed to make relevant documents available.

The report from the mixed commission was awaited in March 1983, but it failed to appear. Now, almost three years later, the mixed commission has still not reported.

The reason, it appears, is that the Vatican and Italy are at loggerheads over interpretation of the evidence. In December 1985 there were discreet

to perceive the overall pattern of illegality. In other words, they did not know what Calvi was up to.

The case for the defense, therefore, is that Archbishop Paul Casimir Marcinkus and his chief aides, Luigi Mennini and Pellegrino di Strobil, were totally deceived by Calvi's cunning wiles. In order to demonstrate their innocence, they have to confess their naivete.

The Italian commissioners, however, reject this defense. They have reached — not always unanimously — the following six conclusions:

— The IOR was "always and continually aware" of what was going on and accepted the solutions that Calvi found to various problems.

— There was a substantial common management relationship between Calvi and the top IOR men with regard to the companies in which they had shared interests. True, in relation to third parties, Calvi often acted alone and without the knowledge of IOR.

— There was a personal relationship between Calvi and at least one senior member of IOR (Marcinkus?) based on the knowledge that "what was really going on would have to be concealed."

— From 1974, at least, there was an understanding between the IOR and Calvi that it would "cover up his un-

1981, which Calvi obtained personally. These enabled him to exploit his earlier association with what he called "the State Bank of the Vatican" to raise enormous funds that soon led to the crash of the Ambrosiano.

It now appears evident that Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, secretary of state, who has been put in charge of sorting out this mess, knew of these conclusions when he addressed the meeting of cardinals on the morning of Nov. 23, 1985.

He then explained that the Holy See had paid \$250 million to Italy not because it thought it had any liability, but in order to show goodwill. He pointed out that if all the claims being made were added up, they would come to a staggering \$18 billion.

If the IOR had gone to court, said Casaroli, it is not certain that it would have lost (but not certain that it would have won, either). So \$250 million was a bargain to spare the church from being dragged through the courts.

Unfortunately, it was not enough to buy off the Italian government or refute the conclusions of the Italian members of the mixed commission. They cannot be whisked away by verbal sleight of hand.

Pleas of ignorance are hard to sustain when it can be shown that in the con-

1984 before the secret service oversight committee of the Italian parliament. According to the Italian newsweekly *L'Espresso*, Parisi, reporting on the investigation of the 1980 Bologna bombing, told the committee that delle Chiaie traveled undisturbed all over Latin America. When asked whether the fascist boss was possibly under the protection of a superpower, Parisi stated that U.S. intelligence offered only half-hearted assistance to its Italian counterparts who were attempting to collar delle Chiaie.

"Delle Chiaie enters and leaves the U.S. as he likes," Pazienza told the *Voice*. "That's what the customs officials said." Indeed, it appears that Italy's most wanted terrorist may have been using Miami as a base of operations. "When I put out feelers for an interview with delle Chiaie in 1984," French TV reporter Pierre Abramovici told the *Voice*, "our intermediary suggested an island near Miami as a meeting place."

While delle Chiaie roams freely on the terror circuit, his Turkish counterpart has come upon hard times. Arrested in France on drug charges in October 1984, Abdullah Catli is sequestered in a Parisian jail cell. When called last September as a witness at the Agca trial in Rome, Catli denied any involvement in the papal plot. He depicted the Grey Wolves as a group of petty thieves who had no political commitment. Catli told the court that he had shared a house with Agca and given him the gun in Vienna, but he insisted that Agca had acted alone.

Catli's whitewashing of the Grey Wolves turned ugly when another witness, Yalcin Osbey, identified Oral Celik (who is still at large) as the running figure in a photo of the crowd at St. Peter's Square taken just after the pope was shot. Osbey, a former Grey Wolf, was visibly shaken when Catli threatened him three times in open

Vatican banks on naivete defense

By PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

Vatican Affairs Writer
Oxford, England

ANALYSIS

IN SEPTEMBER 1982, three financial wise men — Joseph C. Brennan, Carlo Cerutti and Philippe de Weck — were asked to advise the Vatican about a precise question: Was the Institute of Religious Works (IOR), popularly known as the Vatican bank, involved in the crash of the Banco Ambrosiano, whose director, Roberto Calvi, was found hanging from Blackfriars Bridge, London, in June 1982?

The three men (by now they had been joined by a fourth, Hermann J. Abts) confessed that they could not, given the nature of the case, produce a final report. Their advice was that a joint Italy-Holy See commission should be set up to learn the facts. This was accepted. The Holy See agreed to make relevant documents available.

The report from the mixed commission was awaited in March 1983, but it failed to appear. Now, almost three years later, the mixed commission has still not reported.

The reason, it appears, is that the Vatican and Italy are at loggerheads over interpretation of the evidence. In December 1985 there were discreet leaks in an Italian magazine, *Il Tetto from Naples*, which make clear at least what the argument was about.

The report is damaging for the Vatican. The representatives of the Holy See have been sticking to their story through thick and thin. They claim that, although the IOR was involved with the Ambrosiano in countless individual transactions, its directors failed

to perceive the overall pattern of illegality. In other words, they did not know what Calvi was up to.

The case for the defense, therefore, is that Archbishop Paul Casimir Marcinkus and his chief aides, Luigi Merloni and Pellegrino di Strobil, were all deceived by Calvi's cunning wit. In order to demonstrate their innocence, they have to confess their naivete.

The Italian commissioners, however, reject this defense. They have reached — not always unanimously — the following six conclusions:

— The IOR was "always and continually aware" of what was going on and accepted the solutions that Calvi found to various problems.

— There was a substantial common management relationship between Calvi and the top IOR men with regard to the companies in which they had shared interests. True, in relation to third parties, Calvi often acted alone and without the knowledge of IOR.

— There was a personal relationship between Calvi and at least one senior member of IOR (Marcinkus?) based on the knowledge that "what was really going on would have to be concealed."

— From 1974, at least, there was an understanding between the IOR and Calvi that it would "cover up his unorthodox activities within the Banco Ambrosiano group and the companies it controlled."

— There was an awareness on the part of IOR that "its behavior provided Roberto Calvi with the means to carry out operations that could never be divulged."

— The IOR knew the significance of the "letters of patronage" of June 10,

1981, which Calvi obtained personally. These enabled him to exploit his earlier association with what he called "the State Bank of the Vatican" to raise enormous funds that soon led to the crash of the Ambrosiano.

It now appears evident that Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, secretary of state, who has been put in charge of sorting out this mess, knew of these conclusions when he addressed the meeting of cardinals on the morning of Nov. 23, 1985.

He then explained that the Holy See had paid \$250 million to Italy not because it thought it had any liability, but in order to show goodwill. He pointed out that if all the claims being made were added up, they would come to a staggering \$18 billion.

If the IOR had gone to court, said Casaroli, it is not certain that it would have lost (but not certain that it would have won, either). So \$250 million was a bargain to spare the church from being dragged through the courts.

Unfortunately, it was not enough to buy off the Italian government or refute the conclusions of the Italian members of the mixed commission. They cannot be whisked away by verbal sleight of hand.

Pleas of ignorance are hard to sustain when it can be shown that in the conduct of day-to-day business, the IOR and the Ambrosiano were "de facto associates." It emerges that at least three holding companies (Worldwide Trading Corporation, Manic and Zitropo) were definitely owned by IOR but managed by Calvi. ■

priests to exclude women from the "Washing of Feet" ritual on Holy Thursday.

The rite is "intended for men only," Father Richard E. Ward of the diocese's Worship Commission wrote in a Feb. 25 memorandum to all Pittsburgh priests. The original Latin text of the *Sacramentary* (the Vatican's book on

the bishop to make sure that these laws are being carried out," said Lengwin.

But many Pittsburgh Catholics, including women religious and the Association of Pittsburgh Priests (APP), expressed surprise at the diocese's sudden concern with the law's enforcement.

"We do not need this added sign of

the breaking of bread was only shared by Jesus and the apostles?" she asked.

At Pittsburgh's Thomas Merton Center, staff organizer Molly Rush called the memo a "throwback to the worst possible discrimination against women." In a March 10 letter to Ward, Rush and other Merton Center staff members asked for a public retraction

said that, although the committee has received queries from individual parishes, Pittsburgh is the first diocese to raise the issue of women's participation in the Holy Week liturgy. "They're simply being faithful to the rubrical directives, and we always support adherence to the law," the source said. ■

Coaching of Ali Agca clouds conspiracy trial

By MARTIN A. LEE and KEVIN COOGAN

Special to the National Catholic Reporter

New York

ANALYSIS

A JURY IN Rome is set to deliberate after hearing the closing arguments in the controversial trial of seven men accused of conspiring to assassinate Pope John Paul II in 1981. Italian prosecutor Antonio Marini, who spent nine months attempting to establish a Bulgarian connection to the shooting, has called for the acquittal of three former Bulgarian officials "for lack of proof." In what appeared to be a face-saving ploy, Marini implied there was some evidence of guilt but not enough for a conviction. As for the four Turkish defendants, the prosecutor recommended stiff jail sentences.

Defense attorneys for the Bulgarians expressed their dissatisfaction with the prosecutor's proposal, which would not amount to full absolution under Italian law. Giuseppe Consolo, the attorney for

the leading Bulgarian defendant, Sergei I. Antonov, sought a declaration of total innocence. In his final argument, Consolo maintained that Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca had been coached to blame the Bulgarian secret service for the shooting in an effort to discredit the Eastern bloc.

Suspicions of coaching were aroused during the opening weeks of the trial when Agca announced that Francesco Pazienza, formerly a high-ranking official of the Italian military intelligence service SISMI, had visited him in March 1982 at the Ascoli Piceno prison. Agca's inconsistent testimony included the allegation that Pazienza promised him "freedom and a French passport" if he confessed that the Bulgarians hired him to murder the pope as part of a Soviet-inspired plot. The court subsequently heard testimony from convicted racketeer Giovanni Pandico, who also fingered Pazienza as the pointman of the coaching scheme.

Pazienza — now jailed in Manhattan at the behest of the Italian government, which is seeking his extradition — insists that he never had any contact with Agca. When questioned by Judge Ilario Martella last December, Pazienza explained that he left SISMI in March 1981, three months before the papal shooting, to become the

chief lieutenant of Roberto Calvi, president of the Vatican-linked Banco Ambrosiano, which collapsed the following year. Because his tenure with the Italian secret service was already finished, Pazienza contended, he would not have had access to the high-security prison where Agca was incarcerated.

Martella accepted this explanation, but Pazienza wouldn't let the matter rest. He said he thinks he knows who was really behind the coaching of Agca. "My former colleagues in SISMI established a secret 'disinformation' unit and they're the ones who pushed the Bulgarian connection," Pazienza recently told NCR. "When the tale started to unravel, my enemies in the secret service attempted to cover their own tracks by putting out the phony story that I met with Agca. They tried to get a Mafia hitman to kill me so I wouldn't be able to speak out and defend myself."

Pazienza said he thinks the coaching of Agca began in late 1981 and continued through much of 1982, while SISMI was under the direction of General Nino Lugaresi. But how did SISMI get its hooks directly into Agca? A key suspect, according to Pazienza, is Giovanna Senzani, a top leader of the Red Brigades terrorist organization. Although unreported in the U.S. media, many Italians suspect that

the Red Brigades have been infiltrated and manipulated by intelligence agencies over the years.

Red Brigade leader Senzani was arrested in January 1982 and sent to Ascoli Piceno prison. There, he befriended Agca and tutored him in Italian. "Senzani had important contacts in Italian intelligence. He may have been acting on behalf of SISMI during his frequent meetings with Agca," Pazienza told NCR. "The conduit for Senzani was SISMI operative Luciano Bellucci. They were pals since 1966. When Senzani lived in the United States from 1968 to 1972, Bellucci stayed at his apartment on Via La Vita in Rome. Bellucci later joined the Italian secret service."

Bellucci's handling agent, said Pazienza, was a member of SISMI's Third Department (internal affairs), headed by General Notarnicola, who conceived of SISMI's Propaganda-Disinformation unit in 1980. Pazienza claims that two Americans — Reagan administration official Michael Ledeen and cold war careerist Claire Sterling — worked with SISMI during this period. Ledeen and Sterling, whose discredited theories have graced the front page of the *New York Times*, are two of the primary architects of the Bulgarian connection. ■

Loyola Retreat House



Morristown, N.J.



TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON LAY MINISTRY
LA DÉCIMA CONFERENCIA NACIONAL SOBRE MINISTERIO LAICO

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Boston is the third largest diocese in the United States. It is an unruly town, a city of jaywalkers, with a long history of rebellion. If, as one veteran priest who has worked closely with three archbishops put it, Law is accepting the challenge of the archdiocese in a way that Medeiros never did, his leadership may now be undergoing its stiffest test to date.

There are rumblings of rebellion among the more progressive elements of the archdiocese. Sacred Heart parish in Lexington, for example, formally requested that the conservative pastor Law assigned there be transferred, in what some parishioners characterized as a battle between centralized and decentralized models of church. Law, responding through Auxiliary Bishop Alfred Hughes, refused to budge.

Parishioners have asked him to recon-

Cardinal Bernard Law

sider and say more than half of the 1,068-family parish may break away and form their own faith community if Sacred Heart pastor Father Thomas C. Foley stays (NCR, Feb. 20).

Some observers say the incident is characteristic of Law's autocratic mentality, no matter how charismatic and congenial his style may be. Law listens to you so sincerely, said one seasoned cleric, then says something has to be done, but nothing happens.

In that same light, some priests and women religious, both probably in the majority, are grumbling about the cardinal's paternalism. Others complain about his inaccessibility behind the bureaucratic screen of the cabinet

(See Law, page 22)

Marcinkus acted morally, pope told

But some financial aides dissented, report says

By PETER HEBBLETHWAITE
Vatican Affairs Writer
Oxford, England ANALYSIS

IN THE FALL of 1982, when the first revelations about Archbishop Paul Marcinkus' links with financier Roberto Calvi and the crash of the Banco Ambrosiano became public, Pope John Paul II got his top financial aides together and asked each to answer, privately and in writing, the following question: "Do you consider Archbishop Paul Marcinkus to have behaved in a morally unacceptable way?"

Thus reported the *Corriere Della Sera* March 2, in a story written by Luigi Accattoli, the Milan paper's respected religious affairs writer. The article provides a key to unlocking the Vatican bank



imbroglio (NCR, March 6).

The majority of those top papal aides gave John Paul a negative judgment, the report stated.

So from then on, the line of defense has been to play the Vatican sovereignty card, meaning the Italian government has no right to interfere, and to offer Italian judges only the minimum cooperation with their various investigations.

But this was a majority judgment. There was and is, there-

fore, inside the Vatican a group of people who believe Marcinkus was guilty back in 1982. Among them was Cardinal Agostino Casaroli. How does one know?

Because Francesco Pazienza, the star witness in the Milan tribunal, who was at that date work-

(See Vatican finances, page 10)

NCR

ten years since I looked for-
t weeks. Lent, I hope, will
ne for prayer and reflection.

briefly

Items from NCR's correspondents and news services

Curran takes suspension

New Jersey bishops back

Vatican finances

(Continued from page 1)

ing for SISMI, the Italian equivalent of the CIA, revealed that early in 1981, Casaroli asked SISMI to find out what it could about the relationship between Calvi and Marcinkus.

Casaroli already smelled something foul. He knew the terrible harm being done to the church. He also knew that nothing remains a secret forever. Indeed, he once reminded me of the old maxim: "In Rome, everything is a mystery, and nothing is secret."

The shooting of the pope, May 13, 1981, meant Casaroli was effectively in charge of the Vatican, and he used his position to try to sort out once and for all the affairs of the Institute of Religious Works (IOR, the Vatican bank).

He failed to achieve this end. While the pope was in the Gemelli Hospital, recovering from his wounds, Marcinkus was perpetrating his final act of folly (or in Roman jargon "imprudence").

Although Calvi was already convicted and sentenced to four years for breaking currency regulations, Marcinkus Aug. 21, 1981, provided Calvi the "letters of comfort" he needed to reassure the Banco Andino of Peru and the Ambrosiano Group Commercial of Managua that they could have confidence in the list of Vatican-controlled companies, some of which had only a phantom existence.

This is the reason the Milan judges issued their arrest warrant. The charge is that Marcinkus and his two associates are accessories to fraudulent bankruptcy. It will prove terribly hard to refute in an open court, which may be the reason the experiment is not being tried.

Still, in the fall of 1982, most of the pope's advisers thought Marcinkus was innocent. But majorities are not always right. That verdict, it is now being whispered, would have to be modified if "new facts" came to light.

I thought Pazienza's 114 pages, which I have read, constituted evidence

good enough at least to reopen the question. Pazienza was extradited from the United States last summer and interrogated from June 24 to July 18.

Although he is a con man and a fixer and charged with the same offense — complicity in fraudulent bankruptcy — I see no reason he should not be telling the truth in this instance.

Yet, the buzz from the Vatican is that Pazienza was not half so close to events as he claims, that he really knows little, that he has an inflated sense of his importance. All of this is probably true, but it does not prove he is lying about essentials.

The cover-up, or, if that is too strong, the suspicion of a cover-up, is doing immense damage to the church. Two principles are involved. To proclaim justice, the church has to be just or to be seen to be trying to be just.

Second, no one, be he ever so high, be he archbishop or cardinal, is above the law. That, we have so often been told, was the meaning of the martyrdom of St. Thomas More, lord chancellor of England, and of St. Stanislaw of Krakow.

Both were victims of kings who thought they could make up the law as they went along. But justice is an absolute. *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*. Let justice be done, even if the heavens fall down.

I think I can figure out why Pope John Paul is still trying to tough it out. First, it was the policy decided on, though not unanimously, in the fall of 1982. He does not like to admit in public to changing his mind. It would also mean admitting that, in 1982, Casaroli was right and the other advisers were wrong.

Next, he has a natural bond of sympathy with Marcinkus as a man of Lithuanian origin, a fellow Slav. Poland and Lithuania were united for four centuries.

But the main obstacle to admitting the truth is psychological. John Paul lived most of his adult life under a communist regime where the administration, the judiciary and the mass media were all on the same side. They were hostile to the church, seeking every opportunity to discredit it.

John Paul has difficulty appreciating a free investigative press and television and difficulty believing the judiciary is really free in Italy. Therefore, he looks

A brief guide 1

Oxford, England

THE INSTITUTE of Religious Works (IOR), commonly known as the Vatican bank. Founded in 1942 to permit Pope Pius XII to help refugees and church organizations.

The "old" Banco Ambrosiano. Founded 1896 in Milan to offset anti-clerical and Freemason banks. Bankrupt 1982 with losses of \$1,300 million.

APSA (the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See) is distinct from IOR and a rival to it. It deals with ordinary, day-to-day Vatican expenses (the curia, for instance). Current boss: Giuseppe Caprio.

Marcinkus, Paul Casimir, born (Czerwik), 1926, son of a Lithuanian butcher. Becomes president of "Vatican bank" 1971. Golfs. Dines. Famous motto: "You can't run the church on Holy Marys."

Calvi, Roberto, born Milan, April 1920, to a minor bank official. Comes general manager of Banco Ambrosiano in 1971, deputy chairman and managing director from 1974,

for some hidden motive or occult explanation.

But Casaroli could tell him that under fascism had a unity of government and judiciary that made the democratic constitution-makers of 1946 resolved to separate the administration and the judiciary.

There have been half-hearted attempts to claim that the Milan judges have a political motive: A general election is coming, and mud that sticks to the Vatican bank would discredit the Christian Democrats.

But that is desperate barrel-scaping. Devout Catholics have an even greater reason for wanting to see this matter cleared up than communists.

There is, too, a terrible irony in the timing of these disturbing revelations. March 20 was scheduled for a meeting of the 15 who are supposed to put order into Vatican finances.

They were to consider a plan to revivify Peter's Pence by an appeal to local

St. Thomas and St. Paul
Welcome You

Tranquillitas
Ordinis

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A brief guide to Vatican scandal

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and managing director from 1974, fi-

nally president from 1975. Probably
murdered June 1982. Not athletic
enough to commit suicide by swinging
from Blackfriars Bridge over the Lon-
don Thames.

Pazienza, Francesco, born 1946.
SISMI agent. Became full-time con-
sultant to Calvi in March 1981. Deep
and devious. Linked in some mysteri-
ous way with Liceo Gelli, founder of
the pseudo-masonic Lodge P-2. (Gelli
has "gone missing" the last three
years: try the Bulgarian coast.)

Sindona, Michele, born 1920. Sicil-
ian crook and adviser to Vatican in
early 1970s. Declared bankrupt in
1974. Convicted of fraud and perjury
in 1980 by Manhattan court. Inter-
viewed for NCR by Arthur Jones. Died
1986 in prison.

Casaroli, Cardinal Agostino, born
Nov. 24, 1914, secretary of state at the
Vatican since the death of Cardinal
Jean Villot in 1979. Deeply suspicious
of Marcinkus and jealous of the honor
of the Italian Republic. Perilously close
to retirement (1989). —PH

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would have been started with a papal
document explaining the 1986 shortfall
of \$56 million.

In the circumstances, it will be dif-
ficult to issue such a document. Credi-
bility is at stake.

That is the reason I say this is the test
for the pontificate. The effect of the
grand words, the multilanguage
rhetoric and the 33 international trips
will be undermined unless this problem
is resolved.

I think of the phrase used by Alan P.
Herbert, a British satirist of the inter-
war years: "If Big Ben" (the clock at
Westminster Palace) "strikes 13, the
statement is not only false in itself, but
it casts doubt on all previous utterances
from the same source." ■

St. Paul

ou

Tranquillitas
Ordinis

"I consider this one of the most
important books on the
American Catholic church in
years—it may be the book of the
decade." Michael Novak

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